

Application No.: 10/694,062
Reply to Office Action dated September 4, 2007

IN THE DRAWINGS

The attached sheet of drawings includes changes to Fig. 3. This sheet, which includes Fig. 3, replaces the original sheet including Fig. 3.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-32 are presented in the present application. Claims 1-30 are amended, and Claims 31-32 are added by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, the drawings were objected to; the specification was objected to; Claims 1, 5-6, 8, 22-26, and 29-30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as anticipated by Niitsuma et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0050782 A1, herein “Niitsuma”); Claims 2-4 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Niitsuma in view of Kaneko et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0044298 A1, herein “Kaneko”); Claims 9 and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Niitsuma in view of Suzue (U.S. Patent 6,618,166 B1); Claims 10-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Niitsuma in view of Suzue in further view of Toda (U.S. Patent 6,256,107 B1); Claim 14 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Niitsuma in view of Yoshida (U.S. Patent 6,931,432 B1) in further view of Huttenlocher et al. (U.S. Patent 6,011,905, herein “Huttenlocher”); Claims 15-17, 19-21, and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Niitsuma in view of Toda; and Claim 18 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Niitsuma in view of Toda, Yoshida, and Huttenlocher.

Regarding the objection to the specification, Applicants have amended the specification as suggested in the outstanding Office Action. No new matter has been added. Applicants respectfully request that this objection be withdrawn.

Regarding the objection to the drawings, a replacement sheet to replace Figure 3, as suggested by the outstanding Office Action, is submitted herewith. No new matter has been added. Applicants respectfully request that this objection be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 6, 23, 24, 26, and 30 have been amended to clarify whether a format of image data is supportable. This amendment is supported by the specification at least at the paragraph bridging pages 31-32 and the first full paragraph on page 32. Additionally, Claims 1, 23, 26, and 30 have been further amended to recite that format information includes information on a compression rate of image data for a format conversion performable by the connected apparatus. This amendment is supported by the specification at least at the third full paragraph on page 32. Claims 1-30 have been amended to address cosmetic matters of form. No new matter has been added.

Applicants assert the patentability of the amended claims in light of the references cited in the outstanding Office Action. Briefly recapitulating, Claim 1 is directed to an image-forming apparatus with a hardware resource used for image formation, a program configured to perform processing related to the image formation, and a communication part. The image-forming apparatus includes, *inter alia*, a format information acquisition part configured to acquire format information from an apparatus connected to the image-forming apparatus via the communication part, a format determination part configured to determine a transfer-time format of image data to transfer to the connected apparatus based on the acquired format information, and an image data conversion part configured to perform format conversion of the image data to transfer to the connected apparatus in accordance with the determined transfer-time format of the image data. The format information includes

information on whether a format of image data is supportable as input by the connected apparatus and information on a compression rate of image data for a format conversion performable by the connected apparatus.

In a non-limiting example, Figures 14 and 15 show embodiments of format information. Figure 14 shows a MLB image format table. Entries “X,” “Y,” and “Z” indicate whether a conversion from one format to another is performable. A parenthesized number in a cell of the table indicates a compression rate by the corresponding conversion (e.g., a compression rate of image data for a format conversion performable by the connected apparatus). Figure 15 shows an image format table corresponding to formats of input image data. Entries “X” and “Z” indicate whether a format can be input (e.g., is supportable as input by the connected apparatus).

Turning to the applied art, Niitsuma discloses an image forming system including a digital copier that reads a document and converts it into image data by a predetermined compression method.¹ The image data is transferred via a network to a receiving apparatus, which Niitsuma calls an apparatus of the transferring point.

At page 5, line 7 through page 6, line 8, the outstanding Office Action asserts that Niitsuma discloses a format information acquisition part. The outstanding Office Action further asserts that this disclosure can be found in Niitsuma at paragraphs [0116] and [0117]. At that location, Niitsuma describes a second example of a second embodiment, in which whether the image data is compressed is determined according to a result of a negotiation with the apparatus of the transferring point. If the apparatus of the transferring point has an

¹ Paragraph [0065].

extension function, then the apparatus directs the digital copier to compress the data. However, the presence of an extension function only suggests the use of a compatible format; it does not suggest a rate at which a compatible format is compressed. Indeed, Niitsuma is silent regarding a compression rate. Therefore, Niitsuma does not teach or suggest “a format information acquisition part configured to acquire format information . . . including . . . information on a compression rate,” as required by amended Claim 1.

Moreover, in the sixth example of Niitsuma’s second embodiment, the digital copier calculates a ratio of the size of a compressed image data file to the size of its uncompressed analogue. This ratio is used to determine whether to compress the image data before the digital copier transfers the data. Because the compression method is predetermined, the digital copier calculates this ratio without acquiring information from the receiving apparatus.

On the contrary, in the image-forming apparatus of Claim 1, the transfer-time format of image data is not predetermined. Determination of the transfer-time format is based on format information including a compression rate of image data. The image-forming apparatus does not calculate the compression rate itself, because the format information is acquired from the connected apparatus. Therefore, Niitsuma does not teach or suggest acquiring format information from a connected apparatus, the format information including information on a compression rate of image data, as required by amended Claim 1.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claim 1 and each of the claims depending therefrom patentably distinguish over Niitsuma. Additionally, independent Claim 26 recites features analogous to the features of Claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants

respectfully submit that the rejections of Claim 26 and each of the claims depending therefrom are also believed to be overcome in view of the arguments regarding Claim 1.

Regarding the rejection of Claim 8, Applicants respectfully submit that, as described above, Niitsuma does not teach or suggest information on a compression rate. Accordingly, Niitsuma is silent with respect to determining a format based on a compression rate. Therefore, Niitsuma does not teach or suggest determining “a format of image data with a highest compression rate . . . as the transfer-time format of the image data to be transferred,” as required by Claim 8.

Regarding the rejection of amended Claim 23, Applicants submit that, as discussed above, the receiving apparatus of Niitsuma does not supply format information including information on a compression rate of the format of image data. Thus, Niitsuma does not teach or suggest generating format information including information on a compression rate, as required by amended Claim 23.

Moreover, Applicants note that the outstanding Office Action asserts at page 13, lines 5-10, that Niitsuma discloses an image data conversion part. The outstanding Office Action further asserts that this disclosure can be found in paragraph [0117] of Niitsuma in the form of the extension function. At that location, Niitsuma states that when the apparatus has the extension function, the apparatus directs the digital copier to compress and transfer the image data. That is, when the apparatus can extend the compressed data, generating information on a compression rate is unnecessary, because the predetermined compression method is always used.

However, in the image-forming apparatus of Claim 23, the format of the received image data is based on the generated format information including information on a compression rate and not only on the presence of an image data conversion part. Therefore, Niitsuma does not teach or suggest determination of the format of the received image data based on the generated format information, as required by amended Claim 23.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claim 23 and each of the claims depending therefrom patentably distinguish over Niitsuma. Additionally, independent Claim 30 recites features analogous to the features of Claims 1 and 23. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections of Claim 30 and each of the claims depending therefrom are also believed to be overcome in view of the arguments regarding Claims 1 and 23.

Regarding the rejections of the dependent claims over various combinations of Niitsuma, Kaneko, Suzue, Toda, Yoshida, and Huttenlocher, it is respectfully submitted that the applied art has been considered but none of it cures the above-noted deficiencies of Niitsuma in regard to independent Claims 1, 23, 26, and 30. Thus, dependent Claims 2-4, 7, 9-21, and 27-28 are believed to be patentable for at least the reasons discussed above.

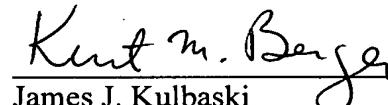
New Claims 31-32 have been added to set forth the invention in a varying scope, and Applicants respectfully submit the new claims are supported by the specification at least at Figure 30 and its accompanying text. No new matter has been added. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that dependent Claims 31-32 are allowable for the same reasons as discussed above with regard to Claim 1, from which Claims 31-32 depend.

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Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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